Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading 5.3: Primary Source Analysis for Renaissance Ideologies**

**Your Task:** Study the documents and answer the questions that follow.

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DOCUMENT 1: The Dignified Man

In 1487 an Italian nobleman and scholar, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, prepared a speech called “Oration on the Dignity of Man.” The work assumes the point of view of God speaking to Adam after his creation.

The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou [you], constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world’s center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion [make] thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.

1. Why does humanity have a special place in the universe, according to Mirandola?
2. What is the relationship between God and humanity in Mirandola’s eyes?
3. What evidence of the Renaissance ideologies of **secularism, humanism, individuality,** and **skepticism**do you see in this passage? Give textual evidence.

DOCUMENT 2: A Universal Man

Below is an excerpt from William Shakespeare (1564-1616). It is from *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2:

“What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!”

1. How does Shakespeare emphasize the potential of man in this excerpt? Refer to a line or two from the excerpt.
2. What evidence of the Renaissance ideologies of **secularism, humanism, individuality,** and **skepticism** do you see in this passage? Give textual evidence.

DOCUMENT 3: Individuals and Accomplishments

Wealthy people with access to education began learning not just religious or practical things, but things that interested them. Geography, music, art, and mathematics were learned because they interested the student, not in order to obtain employment or gain salvation. This painting of two French ambassadors by Hans Holbein shows items associated with subjects that the two men have studied.



4. What subjects are the ambassadors interested in learning? What evidence supports your answer?

1. What evidence of the Renaissance ideologies of **secularism, humanism, individuality,** and **skepticism** do you see in this painting? Give evidence.

DOCUMENT 3: The Legacy of the Renaissance

Below is an excerpt from a poem by Henry Wordworth Longfellow (1807-1882), an American poet.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

Life is but an empty dream!

For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,

Is our destined end or way;

But to act, that each to-morrow

Find us farther than to-day.

1. What evidence of the Renaissance ideologies of secularism, humanism, individuality, and skepticism do you see in this passage? Give textual evidence.

DOCUMENT 4: The Legacy of the Renaissance?

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

   Life is but an empty dream!

For the soul is dead that slumbers,

   And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!

   And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,

   Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,

   Is our destined end or way;

But to act, that each to-morrow

   Find us farther than to-day.